

ISSUE OF CERTAIN OBSOLETE ORDNANCE, ETC., TO EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.

LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF WAR,

TRANSMITTING

A REPORT OF THE GENERAL STAFF OF THE ARMY RELATING TO
ISSUE OF CERTAIN OBSOLETE ORDNANCE AND ORDNANCE
STORES TO EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.

JANUARY 4, 1904.—Referred to the Committee on Military Affairs and ordered to be printed.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington, December 23, 1903.

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith a General Staff report relating to the issue of obsolete ordnance and ordnance stores for the use of State and Territorial educational institutions and recommending legislation upon lines which, for greater convenience, have been thrown into the form of a draft bill. The recommendation of the General Staff has my hearty approval, and I hope that it will receive the favorable consideration of Congress. The United States has now begun the manufacture of the new service rifle, model of 1903. It has in the hands of regular troops, 111,764; in the hands of the organized militia, 96,353, and in reserve, 227,824 (total, 435,941) service rifles and carbines, all models (1896, 1898, 1899), commonly known as the Krag-Jørgensen. It has also on hand available for issue 101,190 of the old Springfields (rifles, model 1879, 23,620; model 1884, 62,350; model 1888, 11,187; carbines, 4,033), besides about 50,000 not yet turned in from the militia, and a number in the hands of the Philippine Scouts.

We have not yet enough of newer models to consider the Springfields obsolete, but they will soon become so, and in the meantime several thousand of older models on hand can be used under the proposed legislation for the purpose of military training in the schools of the country other than those to which details of military officers are made. Such training will be of material value, and I have no question that

the proposed use of the old rifles will be of much greater military value than keeping them in store or selling them for the trifling price which could be realized.

Very respectfully,

ELIHU ROOT,
Secretary of War.

The SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF,
Washington, December 18, 1903.

SIR: I have the honor to invite attention to the following report of the General Staff regarding the issue of obsolete ordnance and ordnance stores for use of State and Territorial educational institutions, and to recommend that necessary legislative authority be secured for the issue of such stores as per draft of a bill inclosed.

Very respectfully,

S. B. M. YOUNG,
Lieutenant-General, Chief of Staff.

The SECRETARY OF WAR.

Memorandum report of the General Staff.

The Chief of Ordnance in the inclosed letter of November 18, 1903, to the Chief of Staff, with reference to a request from the governor of Iowa to be allowed to turn over to the Iowa Industrial School for Boys certain arms issued to the State for arming the militia, states that under the present laws the request of the governor of Iowa can not be complied with; that the arms in question having been issued to the State for arming and equipping its militia can not be lawfully applied to any other purpose, and that Congress has provided another method of supplying institutions of learning with ordnance and ordnance stores.

In connection with the foregoing the Chief of Ordnance proposes for consideration a bill authorizing the issue of obsolete arms and equipments to the governors of States and Territories for use of State schools and colleges where there are persons bonded to care for the property, the issue to be made to the governor on his requisition, and the arms and equipments to be distributed by him, this ordnance to remain the property of the United States and to be accounted for by the governor as provided for like property issued to States and Territories for use of the militia, but not to be charged against the amount allotted to the State for arming and equipping the militia under paragraph 1661, Revised Statutes, as amended.

The bill proposed by the Chief of Ordnance is in principle unobjectionable, provided that by the term obsolete ordnance and ordnance stores are meant only such arms and stores on hand as are, for purposes of issue to either regulars, volunteers, or militia, of no value to the Government. If such stores can be made an inducement for military instruction of any considerable portion of the youth of the country their issue for this purpose will render a better return to the Government than any other disposition that could be made of them.

The requirement of the proposed bill as to bond is a little obscure. The inference would seem to be that the bond provided for is to be given by the institution to the governor of the State. It is not very plain how the Government of the United States could recover on such bond. It is believed to be best to require that the bond should be given by the institution receiving the arms direct to the United States in the same manner and in substantially the same form as bonds are now given for arms issued under the provisions of section 1225, Revised Statutes; also that the issues should be direct and only to such institutions as are designated and recommended by governors.

It is recommended that the draft of a bill appended hereto be substituted for the bill proposed by the Chief of Ordnance and recommended to Congress for enactment.

Draft of proposed bill.

AN ACT authorizing the issue of obsolete ordnance and ordnance stores for use of State and Territorial educational institutions.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Secretary of War is hereby authorized to issue, at his discretion and under proper regulations to be prescribed by him, without cost of transportation to the United States, such obsolete ordnance and ordnance stores as may be available to State and Territorial educational institutions for purposes of drill and instruction of students. And the Secretary of War shall require from such institutions a bond in each case in double the value of the property issued, for the care and safe-keeping thereof, and for the return of the same to the United States when required: *Provided,* That the issues herein provided for shall be made only to institutions upon recommendation of the governors of States and Territories and shall not be made in any case to any educational institution to which issues of such stores are allowed to be made under provisions of existing law.

